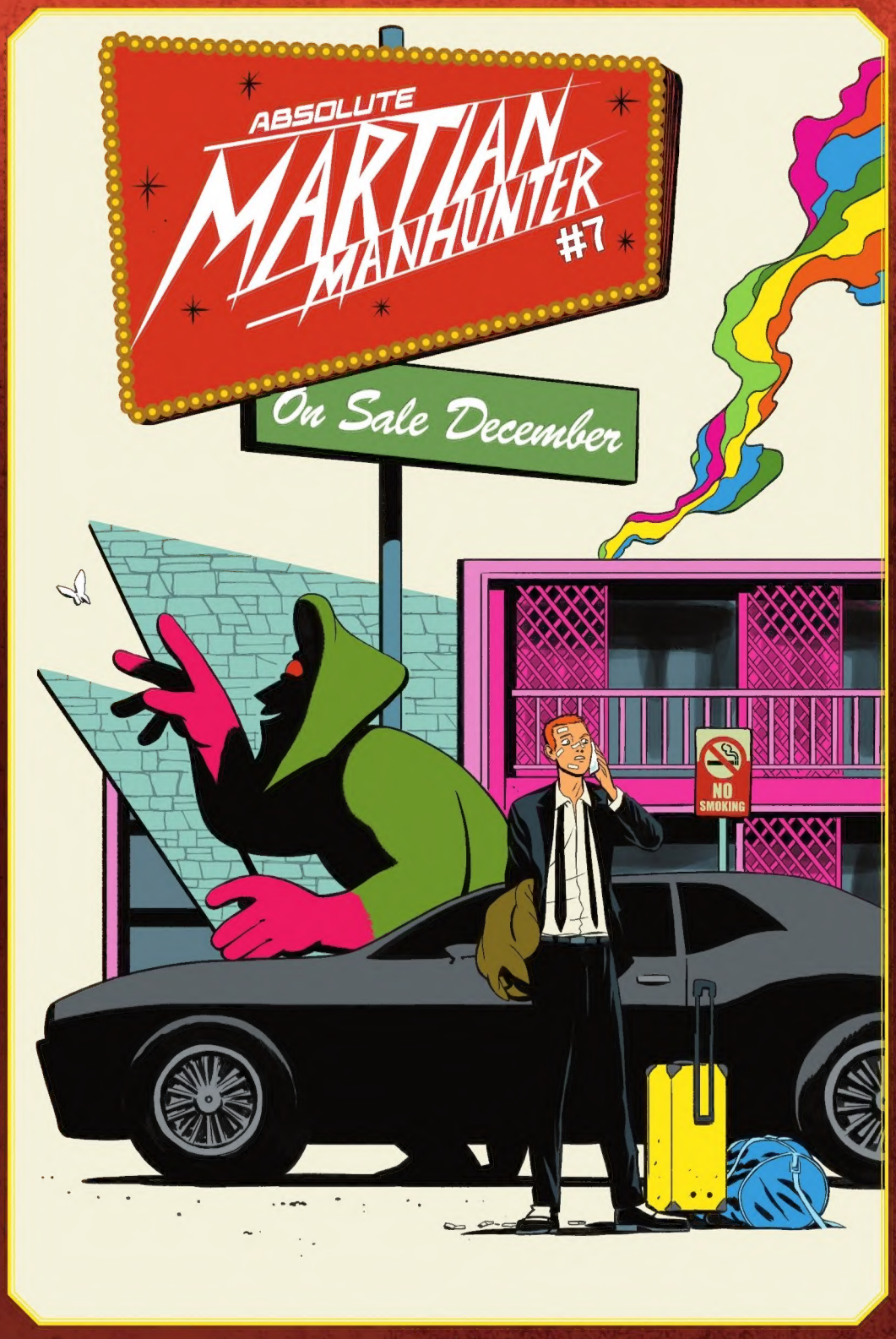
JOKER
ABSOLUTE
BATMAN
ALL IN
15+ TEEN+
15
JOKER
SNYDER
JOCK
MARTIN
DRAGOTTA

ALL IN

THE MOST MIND-BENDING CORNER OF THE ABSOLUTE UNIVERSE RETURNS!



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Written by **DENIZ CAMP**

Art and cover by **JAVIER RODRÍGUEZ**

"IT'S *TIME,* KID. I'VE PUT IT OFF LONG AS I COULD.
"BUT I NEED TO TELL YOU ABOUT...*HIM.*"
"I'M READY. SO WHO IS HE?"
"THAT'S THE FUNNY THING, BRUCE. I'VE BEEN CHASING THIS MAN FOR THREE YEARS AND I'M STILL NOT CERTAIN WHAT'S REAL AND WHAT'S FABRICATION.
"SOME THINGS ADD UP, AND SOME THINGS MAKE NO BLOODY SENSE AT ALL."
"LIKE WHAT?"
"WELL, LIKE HIS *ISLANDS.* HE OWNS HUNDREDS OF THESE TINY ISLANDS ALL OVER THE WORLD, FROM THE ARCTIC OCEAN TO THE TASMAN SEA. UNINHABITED, IMPOSSIBLE TO DEVELOP.
"WILD, USELESS PLACES. BUT HE SPENDS BILLIONS ON THEM. TRAVELS TO ONE OR ANOTHER A FEW TIMES A YEAR, ALONE."
"WHY?"
"THAT'S MY POINT. NO ONE KNOWS. SATELLITES SHOW NOTHING ON THEM.
"THE THEORY IS, HE LIKES TO *HUNT.* BUT HE'S A MYSTERY, BRUCE. THE MAN IN WHITE. WHO DOESN'T LAUGH. ON AND ON."
"THEN FORGET WHAT'S *TRUE,* PENNYWORTH. TELL ME WHAT YOU *BELIEVE.*"

THE JOKER

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ARTIST

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CLAYTON COWLES
LETTERER

NICK DRAGOTTA AND FRANK MARTIN
COVER

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VARIANT COVERS

SANFORD GREENE
1:25 VARIANT COVER

JOCK
1:50 VARIANT COVER

SABRINA FOTICH
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CHRIS CONROY
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

BATMAN CREATED BY BOB KANE WITH BILL FINGER

"IT STARTS HERE, WITH ONE OF THE ***FIRST FILMS*** EVER RECORDED, MAYBE THE ACTUAL FIRST. 1888. SAME YEAR AS LE PRINCE'S *THE ROUNDHAY GARDEN SCENE.*

"AND? WHO AM I LOOKING AT?"

"HIS GREAT-GRANDFATHER."

"IN THE TOP HAT?"

"NO. IN THE ***MAKEUP.*** THE BOY. THE ***CLOWN.***

"***JOSEPH GRIMM I.*** 'JACK.' THE STORY IS, HE GREW UP AN ORPHAN ON THE STREETS OF GOTHAM. MADE HIS LIVING AS A ***STREET PERFORMER.***

"THEY SAY HE WAS ***GOOD,*** TOO. BEST AROUND. SAID YOU COULD HEAR THE ***LAUGHTER*** FOR BLOCKS AND BLOCKS, THOUGH HE HIMSELF NEVER SO MUCH AS CHUCKLED.

"HIS REPUTATION GREW. HE BROUGHT HIS CLOWN ACT TO ***VAUDEVILLE.*** TOOK THE MONEY FROM THAT AND INVESTED IN HIS OWN THEATER. ***'JUST KIDDING.'***"

"***'JK'.***"

"YES. FROM THERE HE INVESTED IN SILENT PICTURES, FUNDED SOME BIG ONES. COMPETITION WAS FIERCE, BUT JACK ALWAYS PREVAILED BY, ACCORDING TO THOSE AROUND HIM, 'MAKING PEOPLE LAUGH LOUDEST'...

VAUDEVILLE

~J.P. + R.M. MALONE ~

PRESENT

JIMBLE

"BY FORTY, HE HAD MADE A ***FORTUNE*** AND BECOME A MEMBER OF GOTHAM'S FINEST MEN'S CLUBS--THE ***FIVE GATES CLUB,*** THE ***SLAUGHTER SELECT,*** AND SO ON.

"IT'S SAID THAT HE, ANDREW MELLON, JOHN ROCKEFELLER, AND OLD ANDREW CARNEGIE HAD THEIR OWN THURSDAY SALON, DEVOTED TO 'FUNDING THE HEALTH AND PROGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC.'

"STILL, HE WAS NEVER ONE FOR THE SPOTLIGHT HIMSELF.

CAPITO

"THERE ARE ALMOST NO PHOTOS OF HIM, NO INTERVIEWS. BARELY ANY RECORDS AT ALL, IN FACT. HE EXISTS MOSTLY IN THE SHOWS HE PRODUCED...AND THE ***CHARITY.***

"JACK WAS A MAJOR PHILANTHROPIST. THAT MUCH IS DOCUMENTED, THOUGH YOU WON'T SEE HIS NAME ON ANYTHING. A WING OF GOTHAM MED. THE GOTHAM MET, GOTHAM UNIVERSITY...

"...HE WAS ESPECIALLY DEVOTED TO ***CHILDREN'S CAUSES,*** WHICH MADE SENSE, GIVEN HIS OWN ROUGH CHILDHOOD. 'LIVE LIKE A CLOWN. LEAVE THE WORLD WITH MORE LAUGHTER THAN WHEN YOU ENTERED.' THAT WAS HIS REPORTED MOTTO.

"JACK DIED IN 1938, ACCORDING TO RECORDS, AND IS BURIED IN A FAMILY CRYPT HERE IN THE CITY."

"JACK'S LEGACY LIVED ON IN HIS SON, ***JACK JR.*** WHO HAD TAKEN OVER THE FAMILY BUSINESS IN THE 1920s AND EXPANDED IT.

"LIKE HIS FATHER, JACK GRIM II INVESTED IN ENTERTAINMENT THAT WOULD 'BRING LAUGHTER' TO THE WORLD, EVENTUALLY BECOMING ONE OF THE EARLY FINANCIERS OF TELEVISION.

"HE CREATED A BUNCH OF SUBSIDIARIES OF JK, ALL NAMED AFTER FAMOUS CLOWNS AND JESTERS--FOX, PIERROT, SZE, HOP-FROG.

"AND, LIKE HIS FATHER, HE STAYED COMMITTED TO PHILANTHROPIC PURSUITS, ESPECIALLY THOSE FOR CHILDREN. HE OPENED HOMES FOR ORPHANS ACROSS THE COUNTRY...

"...BY THE 1960s, JUNIOR'S SON, JACK GRIMM III, WAS THE CENTRAL FIGURE OF JK, STARTING ONE OF THE FIRST ***CABLE NETWORK COMPANIES,*** DEVOTED PRIMARILY TO COMEDIES, CHILDREN'S SHOWS. JACK III WAS A MAJOR FUNDER OF ***PUBLIC BROADCASTING.***

"JACK GRIMM IV WAS BORN SOMETIME IN THE LATE 1970s, AND TOOK THE COMPANY INTO GAMING SYSTEMS. HE ALSO EXPANDED ***JK'S*** PHILANTHROPHY TO GLOBAL CAUSES.

"WHICH FINALLY BRINGS US TO ***OUR*** JACK... ***JACK GRIMM V.*** YOUNG, SMART, AND BY ***FAR*** THE MOST SUCCESSFUL YET.

"HE WAS ONE OF THE FIRST INVESTORS IN ONLINE GAMING PLATFORMS, THE HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE, AND A PRIMARY BACKER IN GRAPHICS PROCESSING UNITS--THE CHIPS THAT THE ENTIRE BLOODY WORLD RUNS ON.

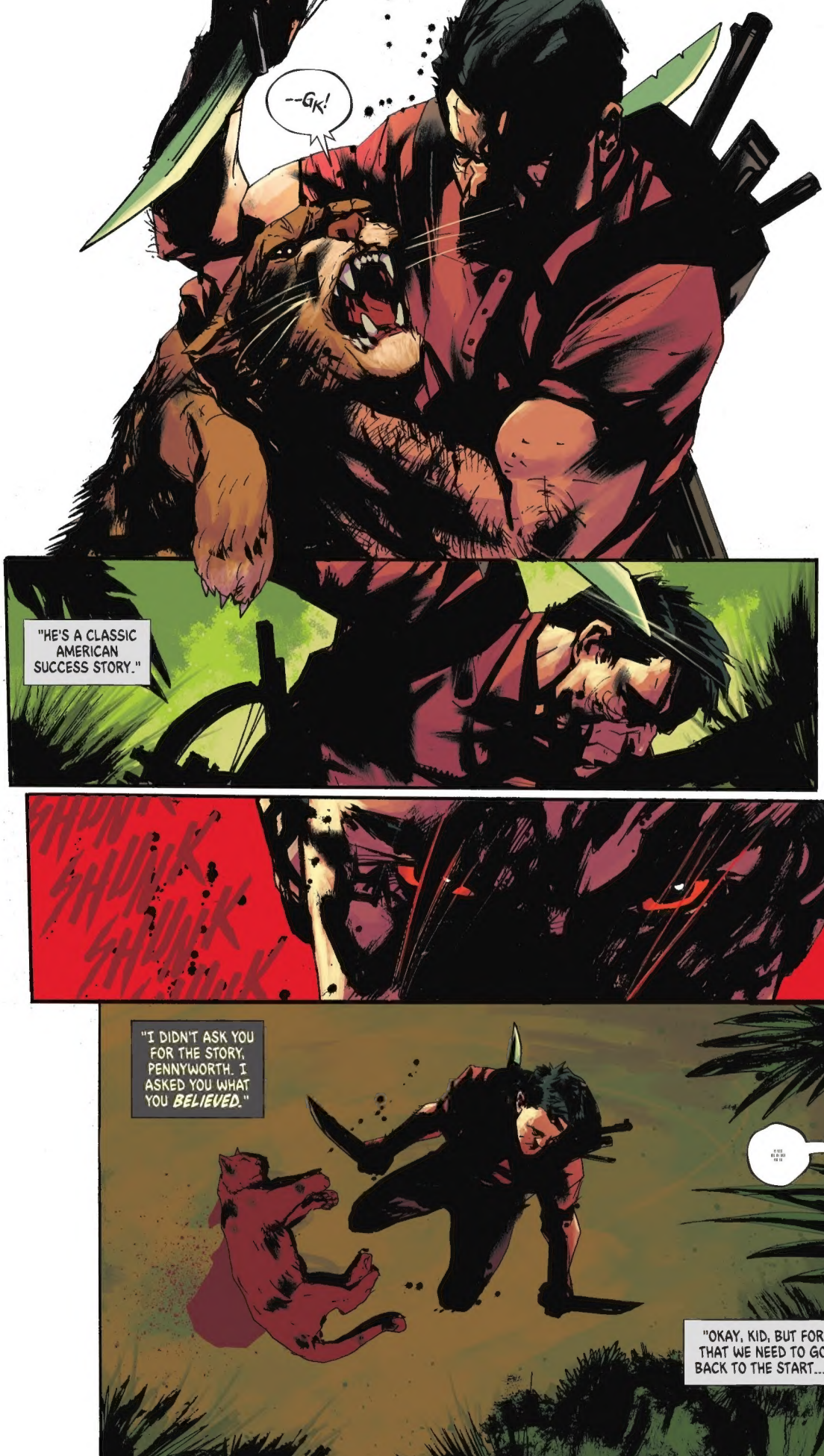
"AND AS HE APPROACHES ***TRILLIONAIRE*** STATUS, JACK V HAS VASTLY WIDENED ***JK'S*** CHARITABLE INITIATIVES--INTERNATIONAL LITERACY PROGRAMS, PEACE ORGS, MEDICINE AND AID DROPS. TO THOSE WHO KNOW HIM, LAUDED AND LOVED."

"SO WHERE IS IT?"

"SO WHERE IS WHAT?"

"WHERE IS THE #$% SMOKING GUN, PENNYWORTH? WHAT'S SO ***SCARY*** ABOUT THIS GUY?"

"ON PAPER? NOTHING IS SO SCARY ABOUT HIM. JUST THE OPPOSITE. HE'S THE FIFTH CHAPTER IN A STORY ABOUT A FAMILY THAT HAS MADE ITS FORTUNE BY EMBRACING THAT VERY FIRST LOVE, THE CLOWN, HELPING AMERICANS--AND PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD--SMILE, LAUGH...
"...SURE, HE'S ECCENTRIC, JACK IS. LIKES TO GO HUNT BIG GAME ALONE ON REMOTE ISLANDS...
"...BUT ALL BILLIONAIRES ARE ECCENTRIC, RIGHT?"
RRRRAAA--


--GK!
"HE'S A CLASSIC AMERICAN SUCCESS STORY."
SHUNK SHUNK SHUNK
"I DIDN'T ASK YOU FOR THE STORY, PENNYWORTH. I ASKED YOU WHAT YOU BELIEVED."
"OKAY, KID, BUT FOR THAT WE NEED TO GO BACK TO THE START..."

"...TO THAT BOY IN THE ALLEY...BACK TO THE ***CLOWN.***

"SEE, YOUNG JACK GRIMM OFTEN PERFORMED OUTSIDE A ***DENTIST'S OFFICE.***

"IN THE 1880s, THEY'D ONLY JUST INTRODUCED ***NITROUS OXIDE*** TO DENTISTRY--LAUGHING GAS--AND JACK WOULD SNEAK IN, LEAK THE GAS INTO THE ALLEY. MAKE THEM LAUGH, SURE, BUT ALSO MAKE THEM ***SUGGESTIBLE,*** AS NITROUS DOES, SO THEY D GIVE HIM ALL THEIR MONEY.

"...NO DIFFERENT FROM WHEN JACK SR. FUNDED HIS OWN ***RIVALS*** IN VAUDEVILLE...***AND*** IN FILM...PLAYING ONE SIDE AGAINST THE OTHER.

"AND THAT'S WHAT MY RESEARCH HAS FOUND ABOUT THE GRIMM FAMILY. THEY'VE ALWAYS PLAYED ***BOTH*** SIDES...

VAUDEVILLE

THEA

"...FOR A CENTURY AND A HALF, THESE MEN HAVE INVESTED IN ONE ***ENDEAVOR*** AND ITS ***COUNTER***...IT EXTENDS BEYOND ENTERTAINMENT TO ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE. THEY EVEN FUNDED OUR WAR EFFORT... AND ***THEIRS.***

"THROUGH SUBSIDIARIES, ALL THEIR CLOWN-NAMED COMPANIES, THE GRIMMS FUND ***RIGHT***-LEANING NEWS NETWORKS...AND ***LEFT***-LEANING ONES. THEY FUND THE AID AND THE WARLORDS WHO STEAL IT. PEACE AND WAR. THE CRIMES AND THE PRISON. ***ARK M.***

"THEY MIGHT BE THE MOST POWERFUL CRIME FAMILY IN HISTORY, PLAYING EVERYONE AGAINST EACH OTHER. PROFITING OFF THE CHAOS THEY SOW. LOYAL TO NO COUNTRY, NO PRINCIPLE...NOTHING BUT ***POWER.***"

"BUT WHY? HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?"

"I...I ALWAYS COME BACK TO THAT MOTTO. 'LIVE LIFE LIKE A CLOWN.'

"A CLOWN PLAYS THE FOOL WHILE MAKING A FOOL OF EVERYONE ELSE. HE'S A MASTERMIND. THE SCHEMER..."

"THE ACT WAS A ***TRICK.*** A SLEIGHT OF HAND...

"...ALL THE GOLD IN THE WORLD ISN'T ENOUGH. NOTHING'S ENOUGH."
HH.
HELLO?
IS ANYONE HOME?
"NOW YOU KNOW. THAT'S THE REPORT I SENT IN TO MY SUPERIORS AT MIG."

HUH...
HELLO?! HELLO, IS SOMEONE--
OH, THANK GOD!
MISTER, I... I'VE BEEN TRAPPED ON THIS ISLAND ALONE FOR NEARLY THIRTY YEARS! I DON'T KNOW HOW I GOT HERE. MY NAME IS HA...
...YOU...?
BUT HOW?
RUN.
NO! IT CAN'T BE YOU!
"I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU REPORTED, PENNYWORTH. WHAT DO YOU #$%& BELIEVE?"
"KID..."
"TELL ME."
"ALL RIGHT, BRUCE, BUT IT MIGHT SOUND A LITTLE...CRAZY."

"WE GO BACK TO THAT ALLEY ONE MORE TIME. TO THE ***CLOWN.***

"BECAUSE WHAT I FOUND, WHEN I DUG DEEPER, WAS THAT MANY OF THE PEOPLE LAUGHING IN THAT FILM ***DIED*** SOON AFTER IT WAS SHOT.

"TWISTED IN PAIN, ***GRINNING.*** A KIND OF ***STRYCHNINE*** POISONING, ONE OF THE FEW TOXINS THAT CAN BE ABSORBED THROUGH THE SKIN--LIKE MAYBE UPON SHAKING THE GLOVED HAND OF A SMALL BOY."

"I'M ***SAYING*** THERE'S A DARKER PROJECT, BRUCE. I HAVE RECORDS OF GRIMM INVESTMENTS IN SOME OF THE DEADLIEST INVENTIONS OF THE LAST HUNDRED YEARS. FROM THE BOMB TO BIOWEAPONS, VIRUSES...

"...THERE ARE RECORDS OF THEM ***LAUGHING,*** BRUCE. THE GRIMM MEN, AT THE ***TESTS***...ONLY THEN."

NO!

READY OR NOT...

NO!

...HERE I ***COME.***

AAAGH!

"WHAT ARE YOU ***GETTING*** AT?! ***SAY*** IT."

"WHAT IF THOSE ISLANDS ARE WHERE HE ***PUTS*** THEM?

"HIS ENEMIES? WHAT IF HE JUST--LEAVES THEM THERE FOR YEARS, UNTIL HE FEELS LIKE--GOD, I SOUND ***MAD.***"

"KEEP GOING. WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE?"

"I BELIEVE HE USES THE ***CHILDREN,*** BRUCE. AT FIRST, HE USED THE ONES IN THE ORPHANAGE, AND NOW--HE USES SOMETHING ELSE..."

"BUT LOTS OF PEOPLE WHO ENCOUNTERED THE GRIMMS OVER THE YEARS CAME TO MYSTERIOUS BAD ENDS. JUMPING OFF BRIDGES, BOATS. VANISHING. BUSINESS RIVALS, POLITICIANS. REPORTERS.

"IN THE '90s, AN ASSOCIATE OF MINE AT THE FBI, HARVEY HARRIS, BEGAN AN INVESTIGATION. DIED IN A BOAT ACCIDENT.

"WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, PENNYWORTH?"

"HE HAS FOUND SOME ***WAY.*** I DON'T KNOW. USING THEIR CELLS, USING THE RESEARCH DONE AT HIS ***ARKS.*** SOME TERRIBLE ELIXIR.

"GO ON, PENNYWORTH. WHO IS HE?"

"THE ***CLOWN,*** BRUCE. WHAT IS A CLOWN? ITS WHOLE ACT IS A CRUEL MOCKERY OF US, OF HUMANITY AS BUMBLING, STUPID. THE CLOWN HATES US. YOU FIND STORIES IN MYTH, LEGENDS FROM ANCIENT TIMES TO NOW...

"...PAGLIACCI. THE JESTER WHO BURNS THE KINGDOM IN BAL DES SAUVAGES. THE ONE WHO CONVINCES US TO KILL EACH OTHER, EVEN AS HE HIMSELF PREYS ON US. THE CLOWN IS DEATH! THE CLOWN IS..."

COMING FOR YOOOOOU...

"STOP DANCING AROUND IT!"

"HE'S..."

"SAY IT, DAMMIT! WHAT DO YOU ***BELIEVE?***"

KRAK-AK-KK

MY GOD...

HEH.

"I BELIEVE THAT THERE ***IS*** NO GRIMM FAMILY, ALL RIGHT? I BELIEVE THERE IS NO JACK I, II, III, IV, V--THERE'S ONLY EVER BEEN ***ONE*** JACK GRIMM! ***HIM!***

"MAYBE IT'S JUST HIS INFERNAL SCIENCE. MAYBE IT'S SOME DARK PACT. I DON'T KNOW! MAYBE IT'S #$%& BOTH. AND I ***KNOW*** HOW IT SOUNDS, KID! I KNOW.

"BUT I LOOK AT HIM AND...

"...HE'S SOMETHING TERRIBLE, BRUCE. A NIGHTMARE THING THAT STALKS THE EARTH, NOT A MAN WHO NEVER LAUGHS AT ANYTHING, BUT A BEAST THAT'S ***ALWAYS*** LAUGHING AT US."

AAAAAIIEEEE!

"THE ONE WHOSE LAUGHTER WE ONLY HEAR WHEN IT'S TOO LATE.

HEEEEE...

"SO WHO IS HE?"

"HE'S THE *JOKER*."

HA HA HA HA!

He didn't sign up for this. Sure, he wanted a fight, to punch back, to scream, but **this**...

...in just the last year, the world has cracked itself open and revealed its true face to him.

All its monsters.

Monsters everywhere he looks.

The other night, I found him watching a story about a woman in Gateway City who claims to be magic, some kind of god-warrior from Hell.
To his credit, he just keeps on, he pushes forward, but you...
Did you really tell him about Grimm for his own sake? No, you told him because you couldn't live with it anymore. Because deep down, you're a coward.
Just yesterday a report put Grimm on one his #$%¢ islands, off the coast of Colombia.
But you couldn't let it alone...

...even with Grimm three thousand miles away from Gotham.

WELL, HELLO, THERE.

WELCOME BACK TO THE MANOR, MASTER GRIMM. IT'S SO NICE TO FINALLY HAVE YOU HOME.

ARE YOU HUNGRY?

NO, I ATE.

I HAVE PLANS TO MAKE, THOUGH. SO IF YOU NEED ME...
...I'LL BE IN THE CAVE.
NEXT: ABSOLUTE WONDER WOMAN!

THE CLOWN QUEEN OF CRIME IS NOW A BICENTENNIAL WOMAN!
ALL IN
HARLEY QUINN
#200*
TNT
200
*also known as Harley Quinn #57
FROM IVY
FROM THE BAT MAN
Original series artists TERRY DODSON and RACHEL DODSON join current creative team ELLIOTT KALAN and CARLOS OLIVARES to celebrate two hundos of HARLEY!
Cover by YANICK PAQUETTE
An oversize clownstravaganza on sale in DECEMBER

DC NATION SPOTLIGHT ON

DC K.O.

DC K.O. CONTINUES IN DECEMBER WITH THE HARD-HITTING ALL FIGHT MONTH!

DECEMBER:

- ***DC K.O. KNIGHTFIGHT #2***
- ***DC K.O.: SUPERMAN VS. CAPTAIN ATOM***
- ***AQUAMAN #12***
- ***DC K.O.: WONDER WOMAN VS. LOBO***
- ***TITANS #30***
- ***DC K.O.: HARLEY QUINN VS. ZATANNA***
- ***THE FLASH #28***
- ***SUPERMAN #33***
- ***DC K.O.: RED HOOD VS. JOKER***
- ***JUSTICE LEAGUE UNLIMITED #14***

JANUARY:

- ***DC K.O. KNIGHTFIGHT #3***
- ***DC K.O. #3***
- ***TITANS #31***
- ***DC K.O.: GREEN LANTERN GALACTIC SLAM***
- ***SUPERMAN #34***
- ***THE FLASH #29***
- ***JUSTICE LEAGUE UNLIMITED #15***
- ***DC K.O.: THE KIDS ARE ALL FIGHT SPECIAL***

FEBRUARY:

- ***DC K.O. KNIGHTFIGHT #4***
- ***DC K.O. #4***
- ***TITANS #32***
- ***SUPERMAN #35***
- ***THE FLASH #30***
- ***JUSTICE LEAGUE UNLIMITED #16***

MARCH:

- ***DC K.O. #5***

ALL IN

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The Last Kryptonian-DCP